



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

[Docket No. FMCSA-2021-0026]

Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders

AGENCY: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of applications for exemption; request for comments.

SUMMARY: FMCSA announces receipt of applications from 32 individuals for an exemption from the prohibition in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) against persons with a clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or any other condition that is likely to cause a loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) to drive in interstate commerce. If granted, the exemptions would enable these individuals who have had one or more seizures and are taking anti-seizure medication to operate CMVs in interstate commerce.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before [Insert date 30 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Docket No. FMCSA-2021-0026 using any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to www.regulations.gov/, insert the docket number, FMCSA-2021-0026, in the keyword box, and click “Search.” Next, sort the results by “Posted (Newer-Older),” choose the first notice listed, and click on the “Comment” button. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- Mail: Dockets Operations; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- Hand Delivery: West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC, 20590-0001 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. See the “Public Participation” portion of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section for instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Christine A. Hydock, Chief, Medical Programs Division, (202) 366-4001, fmcsamedical@dot.gov, FMCSA, DOT, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Room W64-224, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. If you have questions regarding viewing or submitting material to the docket, contact Dockets Operations, (202) 366-9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Participation

A. Submitting Comments

If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this notice (Docket No. FMCSA-2021-0026), indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation. You may submit your comments and material online or by fax, mail, or hand delivery, but please use only one of these means. FMCSA recommends that you include your name and a mailing address, an email address, or a phone number in the body of your document so that FMCSA can contact you if there are questions regarding your submission.

To submit your comment online, go to www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FMCSA-2021-0026. Next, sort the results by “Posted (Newer-Older),” choose the first notice listed, click the “Comment” button, and type your comment into the text box on the following screen. Choose whether you are submitting your comment as an individual or on behalf of a third party and then submit.

If you submit your comments by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit comments by mail and would like to know that they reached the facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope.

FMCSA will consider all comments and material received during the comment period.

B. Viewing Comments

To view comments go to www.regulations.gov. Insert the docket number, FMCSA-2021-0026, in the keyword box, and click “Search.” Next, sort the results by “Posted (Newer-Older),” choose the first notice listed, and click “Browse Comments.” If you do not have access to the internet, you may view the docket online by visiting Dockets Operations in Room W12-140 on the ground floor of the DOT West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 366-9317 or (202) 366-9826 before visiting Dockets Operations.

C. Privacy Act

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public to better inform its regulatory process. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to www.regulations.gov, as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL-14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at www.transportation.gov/privacy.

II. Background

Under 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA may grant an exemption from the FMCSRs for no longer than a 5-year period if it finds such exemption would likely achieve a level of safety that is equivalent to, or greater than, the level that would be achieved absent such exemption. The statute also allows the Agency to renew exemptions at the end of the 5-year period. FMCSA grants medical exemptions from the FMCSRs for a 2-year period to align with the maximum duration of a driver's medical certification.

The 32 individuals listed in this notice have requested an exemption from the epilepsy and seizure disorders prohibition in 49 CFR 391.41(b)(8). Accordingly, the Agency will evaluate the qualifications of each applicant to determine whether granting the exemption will achieve the required level of safety mandated by statute.

The physical qualification standard for drivers regarding epilepsy found in § 391.41(b)(8) states that a person is physically qualified to drive a CMV if that person has no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or any other condition which is likely to cause the loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a CMV.

In addition to the regulations, FMCSA has published advisory criteria¹ to assist medical examiners (MEs) in determining whether drivers with certain medical conditions are qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce.

The criteria states that if an individual has had a sudden episode of a non-epileptic seizure or loss of consciousness of unknown cause that did not require anti-seizure medication, the decision whether that person's condition is likely to cause the loss of consciousness or loss of ability to control a CMV should be made on an individual basis by the ME in consultation with the treating physician. Before certification is considered, it is suggested that a 6-month waiting period elapse from the time of the episode.

¹ These criteria may be found in APPENDIX A TO PART 391—MEDICAL ADVISORY CRITERIA, section H. *Epilepsy*: § 391.41(b)(8), paragraphs 3, 4, and 5, which is available on the internet at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2015-title49-vol5/pdf/CFR-2015-title49-vol5-part391-appA.pdf>.

Following the waiting period, it is suggested that the individual have a complete neurological examination. If the results of the examination are negative and anti-seizure medication is not required, then the driver may be qualified.

In those individual cases where a driver has had a seizure or an episode of loss of consciousness that resulted from a known medical condition (e.g., drug reaction, high temperature, acute infectious disease, dehydration, or acute metabolic disturbance), certification should be deferred until the driver has recovered fully from that condition, has no existing residual complications, and is not taking anti-seizure medication.

Drivers who have a history of epilepsy/seizures, off anti-seizure medication and seizure-free for 10 years, may be qualified to operate a CMV in interstate commerce. Interstate drivers with a history of a single unprovoked seizure may be qualified to drive a CMV in interstate commerce if seizure-free and off anti-seizure medication for a 5-year period or more.

As a result of MEs misinterpreting advisory criteria as regulation, numerous drivers have been prohibited from operating a CMV in interstate commerce based on the fact that they have had one or more seizures and are taking anti-seizure medication, rather than an individual analysis of their circumstances by a qualified ME based on the physical qualification standards and medical best practices.

On January 15, 2013, FMCSA announced in a Notice of Final Disposition titled, “Qualification of Drivers; Exemption Applications; Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders,” (78 FR 3069), its decision to grant requests from 22 individuals for exemptions from the regulatory requirement that interstate CMV drivers have “no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of epilepsy or any other condition which is likely to cause loss of consciousness or any loss of ability to control a CMV.” Since that time, the Agency has published additional notices granting requests from individuals for exemptions from the regulatory requirement regarding epilepsy found in § 391.41(b)(8).

To be considered for an exemption from the epilepsy and seizure disorders prohibition in § 391.41(b)(8), applicants must meet the criteria in the 2007 recommendations of the Agency's Medical Expert Panel (78 FR 3069).

III. Qualifications of Applicants

Andrew Anzalone

Mr. Anzalone is a 24-year old class DM license holder in Massachusetts. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2010. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2010. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Anzalone receiving an exemption.

Anthony Cavaliere

Mr. Cavaliere is a 33-year old class BM license holder in New York. He had a generalized cerebral concussion and has been seizure free since 2010. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2011. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Cavaliere receiving an exemption.

Shane Chacon

Mr. Chacon is a 53-year old class A license holder in Idaho. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free since 1997. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2019. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Chacon receiving an exemption.

Brad Crawford

Mr. Crawford is a 38-year old class E license holder in Louisiana. He has a history of generalized epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2013. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2015. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Crawford receiving an exemption.

Michael Davee

Mr. Davee is a 54-year old class C license holder in California. He had a single, provoked seizure in October 2017. He does not take anti-seizure medication. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Davee receiving an exemption.

Callon Hegman

Mr. Hegman is a 26-year old class E license holder in Missouri. He has a history of juvenile absence epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2012. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2017. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Hegman receiving an exemption.

Jacob Hitchcock

Mr. Hitchcock is a 31-year old class C license holder in Iowa. He has a history of non-intractable epilepsy and has been seizure free since May 2010. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2010. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Hitchcock receiving an exemption.

Holly Hobert

Ms. Hobert is a 27-year old class O license holder in Nebraska. He has a history of generalized epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2013. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2016. His physician states that he is supportive of Ms. Hobert receiving an exemption.

Gary Johnson

Mr. Johnson is a 49-year old class E license holder in Missouri. He has a history of chronic epilepsy and has been seizure free since March 2012. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2015. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Johnson receiving an exemption.

Gregory Johnson

Mr. Johnson is a 44-year old class C license holder in North Carolina. He has a history of seizures and has been seizure free since June 2011. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2013. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Johnson receiving an exemption.

Lance Johnson

Mr. Johnson is a 54-year old class D license holder in Tennessee. He has a history of complex partial seizures and has been seizure free since 2009. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2018. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Johnson receiving an exemption.

Alan Keil

Mr. Keil is a 45-year old class three license holder in Hawaii. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free for more than 10 years. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2011. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Keil receiving an exemption.

Kim Langan

Mr. Langan is a 59-year old class CM license holder in California. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2013. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2015. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Langan receiving an exemption.

Armando Macias-Tovar

Mr. Macias-Tovar is a 34-year old class E license holder in Florida. He has a history of generalized epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2013. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2011. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Macias-Tovar receiving an exemption.

Christian Mandahl

Mr. Mandahl is a 31-year old class D license holder in Montana. He has a history of primary generalized epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2012. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2012. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Mandahl receiving an exemption.

Joseph Mendoza

Mr. Mendoza is a 48-year old operator license holder in Indiana. He has a history of seizure disorder and has been seizure free since 1996. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2013. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Mendoza receiving an exemption.

Edna Merritt

Ms. Merritt is a 59-year old class D license holder in Tennessee. She has a history of partial complex seizure disorder and has been seizure free since 2010. She takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2007. Her physician states that he is supportive of Ms. Merritt receiving an exemption.

Richard Packer

Mr. Packer is a 33-year old class A license holder in Idaho. He has a history of non-intractable generalized idiopathic epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2003. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2003. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Packer receiving an exemption.

Alexander Paradis

Mr. Paradis is a 24-year old class 10 license holder in Rhode Island. He has a history of focal epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2010. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2016. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Paradis receiving an exemption.

Steven Paul

Mr. Paul is a 60-year old class DM license holder in Wisconsin. He has a history of seizure disorder and has been seizure free since 2012. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2013. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Paul receiving an exemption.

Kevin Podman

Mr. Podman is a 48-year old commercial driver's license (CDL) holder in Illinois. He has a history of an unprovoked, one-time, generalized tonic-clonic seizure and has been seizure free since 2014. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2014. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Podman receiving an exemption.

Michael Reimer

Mr. Reimer is a 37-year old class C license holder in California. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2012. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2012. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Reimer receiving an exemption.

Richard Riley

Mr. Riley is a 66-year old class A license holder in Iowa. He has a history of a single generalized nocturnal seizure and has been seizure free since August 6, 2020. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since August 6, 2020. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Riley receiving an exemption.

Charles Rivet

Mr. Rivet is a 43-year old class 10 license holder in Iowa. He has a history of complex partial seizure disorder and has been seizure free since 2013. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2012. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Rivet receiving an exemption.

Brian Runk

Mr. Runk is a 31-year old class A license holder in Pennsylvania. He has a history of a single, unprovoked, nocturnal seizure and has been seizure free since 2016. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2017. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Runk receiving an exemption.

Lucas Schmidt

Mr. Schmidt is a 41-year old class D license holder in New York. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free since 1997. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same for more than 10 years. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Schmidt receiving an exemption.

Bradley Scruggs

Mr. Scruggs is a 27-year old class A license holder in California. He has a history of focal awareness seizures and has been seizure free since 2007. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2015. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Scruggs receiving an exemption.

Kacen Shaffer

Mr. Shaffer is a 22-year old class R license holder in Colorado. He has a history of epilepsy and has been seizure free since 2013. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2014. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Shaffer receiving an exemption.

Shaen Smith

Mr. Smith is a 53-year old class D license holder in Minnesota. He has a history of localization-related epilepsy and has been seizure free since 1998. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2015. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Smith receiving an exemption.

Kip West

Mr. West is a 53-year old class R license holder in Colorado. He has a history of seizures and has been seizure free since 1985. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 1985. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. West receiving an exemption.

Derek Wettstein

Mr. Wettstein is a 37-year old class C license holder in Texas. He has a history of idiopathic epilepsy and epileptic syndrome, not intractable, without status epilepticus and has been seizure free since 2004. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2004. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Wettstein receiving an exemption.

Jeremy Williams

Mr. Williams is a 19-year old CDL holder in Mississippi. He has a history of a single unprovoked seizure and has been seizure free since 2017. He takes anti-seizure medication with the dosage and frequency remaining the same since 2018. His physician states that he is supportive of Mr. Williams receiving an exemption.

IV. Request for Comments

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 31136(e) and 31315(b), FMCSA requests public comment from all interested persons on the exemption petitions described in this notice. We will consider all comments received before the close of business on the closing date indicated under the DATES section of the notice.

Larry W. Minor,
Associate Administrator for Policy.